

Mengistu, and Eritrean tanks rolled triumphantly into the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa. In the minds of the Eritreans, they had fought and won a three-decade struggle against a state ten times as populous, with no help from either of the superpowers or anyone else in the outside world. They now feel that they owe nothing to anybody, and they are filled with disdain for international opinion. (A taxi driver berated me for the West's focus on the crimes of the former Yugoslav dictator Slobodan Milosevic; Mengistu, he said, was responsible for at least twice as many deaths through his collectivization programs, but now lives in lavish exile in Zimbabwe.)

In 1996, following a long series of town meetings, the Eritreans drafted what one foreign diplomat has called "an impeccable constitution." But a second war with Ethiopia erupted in 1998, and the constitution has never been implemented. That war lasted until 2000; by some estimates it left 19,000 Eritreans and 60,000 Ethiopians dead, after tanks and fighter jets engaged in desert combat reminiscent of the Arab-Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973. A U.S.-brokered ceasefire has resulted in the current demarcation of the disputed border under UN auspices.

Since this latest war the very stubbornness and social discipline that continue to make Eritrea the most civil of societies, in ways rarely considered by Western journalists and policy elites, have also made it a pariah in Europe and the United States—and for good reason. In 2001 national elections were postponed indefinitely (though free and fair elections at the village level were under way at the time of my visit). Far more disturbing, though, is that Eritrea now has the worst press repression in Africa. And in a widespread government crackdown on political dissent, eleven high-ranking officials, nine journalists, several businessmen, and two Eritreans working for the political and economic sections of the U.S. embassy were arrested; they are still being held without charges. Moreover, a campaign of national mobilization requires young men and women to spend eighteen months in the military or the civil service: a good idea in principle, but they are often kept much longer, with no guaranteed release date. That, together with the political repression and the exceedingly slow pace of economic reform, has induced young people to quietly leave the country. An increasingly disaffected diaspora has refused to invest substantial amounts in Eritrea until conditions have been liberalized.

"We're not asking all that much," one foreign diplomat told me. "They don't even have to hold national elections. If they would just implement a version of China's economic reforms, this place could bloom overnight, like Singapore, given its social control and small population." But several diplomats admitted that the sense of patriotism is so strong here, except among some of the urban elite in Asmara, that they detect no widespread unhappiness with the regime. "The change would have to come at the top," one foreign resident told me. "It's not altogether impossible that we will wake up tomorrow morning and learn that Isaias is no longer around." Another outside expert told me that he has not given up on the President, but if 2003 goes by without some political and economic reforms, he will consign Afewerki to the ranks of boorish African strongmen.

My first interview with Afewerki was in 1986, in a cave in northern Eritrea, during the war with Ethiopia. That meeting had been scheduled for ten in the morning—and at ten exactly he walked in and said, "You have questions for me?" He hasn't changed. He was just as punctual when we met this time, and he spoke in the same blunt and re-

mote tone, with the same shy asceticism. He spoke in intense, spare bursts of cold analysis—in contrast to the gasbag homilies one hears from many Arab and African politicians—for more than two hours. Afewerki may be the most intellectually interesting politician in the history of postcolonial Africa.

"All that we have achieved we did on our own," he said. "But we have not yet institutionalized social discipline, so the possibility of chaos is still here. Remember, we have nine language groups and two religions. No one in Africa has succeeded in copying a Western political system, which took the West hundreds of years to develop. Throughout Africa you have either political or criminal violence. Therefore we will have to manage the creation of political parties, so that they don't become means of religious and ethnic division, like in Ivory Coast or Nigeria." He went on to say that China was on the right path—unlike Nigeria, with its 10,000 dead in communal riots since the return of democracy, in 1999. "Don't morally equate the rights of Falun Gong with those of hundreds of millions of Chinese who have seen their lives dramatically improve," he told me.

Yemen, Afewerki thinks, is "a medievalist society and tribal jungle going through the long transition to modernity." He accused it of advancing an "Arab national-security strategy against Israel," a country he openly supports. However, he accepted the international arbitration that awarded the disputed Hanish Islands, in the Red Sea, to Yemen. As for Ethiopia, he said it could fragment, because it is controlled by minority Tigreans who have created a Balkanized arrangement of ethnic groups (Amharas, Oromos, and so on) rather than trying to forge an imperial melting pot, in the way of Halle Selassie.

Despite Afewerki's refreshing, undiplomatic brilliance, a few hours with him can be troubling. His very austerity, personal efficiency, and incorruptibility are mildly reminiscent of Mengistu himself (who also suffered from a seeming excess of pride), even though the latter was a mass murderer and Afewerki could yet turn out to be among Africa's most competent rulers. Civilization in the Home of Africa has often bred sharp political minds that, with cold efficiency, dealt with their intellectual enemies not through written attacks but by imprisoning or killing them. And it is said repeatedly in Asmara that the President has closed himself off since arresting the very people who challenged him intellectually.

General Franks, on several visits here, and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, during a visit last December, have held long talks with Afewerki. "The meetings were superb," Afewerki told me. "I mean that they were frank, without pretensions or flattery on either side. I share the strategic view of the Americans in the region. French forces in Djibouti have been a stabilizing factor, and U.S. troops will add to that. You need outside powers to keep order here. It sounds colonialist, but I am only being realistic."

When I pressed Afewerki about human-rights abuses, which Rumsfeld had pointedly raised in their meeting two weeks earlier, he said, "If you just leave us alone, we will handle these matters in a way that won't damage our bilateral relationship and won't embarrass us or you." He indicated that he would be more likely to satisfy U.S. demands on human rights in the context of a growing military partnership, but would not do so if merely hectored by the State Department.

I worried that Afewerki, like many other realists, is obsessed with everything that could go wrong in his country rather than with what could go right. True realism re-

quires a dose of idealism and optimism, or else policy becomes immobilized. And that might be Afewerki's problem. He seemed more comfortable when I first met him, in a state of wartime emergency, than he does now, in a state of peacetime possibility. He analyzes brilliantly what he knows, but he gives in to paranoia about what he doesn't know. He did not seem to understand that U.S. foreign policy is often a synthesis of what the State and Defense Departments are comfortable with, and that therefore Foggy Bottom alone cannot be blamed for Eritrea's image problems in the United States.

Nevertheless, Afewerki has essentially offered the United States exactly what it wants: bases enabling its military to strike at anyone in the region at any time, without restrictions. Although the World Bank has questioned the economic viability of a new airport at Massawa with a long jet runway, Afewerki reportedly told Rumsfeld, "The runway can handle anything the U.S. Air Force wants to land on it." Eritrea also boasts deepwater port facilities at Massawa and Assab, both strategically placed near the mouth of the Red Sea.

Afewerki told me, "The increasing social and economic marginalization of Africa will be a fact of life for a very long time to come." Ethiopia in particular, he said, will weaken internally as the Oromos and others demand more power. Its Tigrean Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, already lives inside a vast security apparatus designed for his protection. Meanwhile, across the Red Sea in Yemen, not only water but oil, too, is running out even as the armed young population swells, potentially threatening the political order of significant parts of Arabia. And with fighting terrorism now a permanent strategic priority of the United States, the stability and discipline of Eritrea make it the perfect base for projecting American power and helping Israel in an increasingly unstable region. That, in turn, might foster the Singaporean kind of development for which, according to some, Eritrea appears suited.

So there you have it: Yemen and Eritrea, two case studies in the war on terrorism. In Yemen the United States has to work with unsavory people in a tribalized society in order to prevent more-unsavory people from destabilizing it to the benefit of Osama bin Laden. In Eritrea the United States may have to use a bilateral military relationship to nudge the country's President toward prudent political and economic reform, so that Eritrea, too, won't be destabilized. Thus our military involvement with both nations will mean political involvement in their domestic affairs—and throughout the ages that has been the essence of imperialism.

EXPRESSING SUPPORT AND APPRECIATION FOR THE PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES PARTICIPATING IN OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

SPEECH OF

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 20, 2003

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the courageous men and women serving in our Armed Forces.

As we speak tonight, over 200,000 American soldiers are facing the reality of war straight in the eye. Thousands more here at

home and around the world are also protecting us from harm and defending our freedoms. We honor all of them today for their dedicated service to our country.

Two weeks ago, I was proud to join my colleagues in voting for a resolution to commend our troops. The resolution was passed unanimously.

With the outbreak of war upon us, we should send another clear message to the troops that we stand united behind them. I am very disappointed, however, that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have chosen to use this resolution not simply as an opportunity to express our gratitude to the troops, but also as a political tactic to bolster the President's war agenda. This resolution contains political praise for policies that have brought us to war. This language was unnecessary in a resolution designed to commend our troops.

Last fall, I joined over 120 of my colleagues in voting against authorizing the President to use military force against Iraq. The concerns that led me to oppose that authorization remain.

I continue to be troubled by the policies that have led to this war, particularly the doctrine of preemption and the lack of broad international support. We need to repair our diplomatic relations with our allies and countries with which we have had good relations.

We will need a strong coalition of allies to rebuild Iraq. These partnerships are also valuable to our global war on terrorism.

In my home state of California, over 8,000 National Guard members and 10,000 reservists have been called to duty. These individuals have left their jobs, postponed their education, and said goodbyes to their loved ones to serve their country in a time of war. They've put their lives on hold to go to serve their country during a time of war.

Recently, I visited some of these reservists who were being deployed from my district. They were men and women from diverse backgrounds and cultures. Men and women who never imagined that they would find themselves being deployed to fight war. I could see the fear of war in their eyes. I also saw determination, the strength of a soldier ready for battle.

Tonight, I think of these men and women and the thousands of others that have left their homes and families to serve their country. They're our husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, nieces and nephews, and granddaughters and grandsons.

We must let our loved ones know that we support them, especially at this critical stage in this military conflict. That is why I will support this resolution despite my strong disagreement with some aspects of it. I want the troops to know that I stand behind them and commend them for their commitment to defending freedoms here and abroad.

I hope and pray that this military conflict will be brief and with the least possible loss of human lives. I extend my special prayers to men and women in uniform and their families during this difficult time, and I look forward to welcoming them home soon.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO CERTAIN JOINT COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE AND SENATE

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN B. LARSON

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support H. Res. 134, which elects Members of the House to serve on the Joint Committee of Congress on the Library and the Joint Committee on Printing, as provided for in the applicable statutes relating to these two entities.

All of these members also serve on the Committee on House Administration, except in the case of the Joint Library Committee, where we will again be joined, pursuant to a new statute enacted in 2000, by the chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch.

The House and Senate will each have three Majority and two Minority members on both panels. The Senate passed a resolution, S. Res. 84, electing its members to the two joint committees on March 13.

The subject matter under the jurisdiction of the joint committees requires bicameral oversight which neither chamber can exercise alone.

The Joint Committee on the Library, created originally in 1802, currently oversees the Library of Congress, the Congressional Research Service and the Botanic Gardens. It operates much like a "board of trustees" in relation to the Librarian of Congress, who is a presidential appointee, and other key Library personnel.

It supervises the Architect of the Capitol in his administration of the Botanic Gardens.

It supervises works of fine arts, including the National Statuary Hall Collection in the Capitol, and directs the Architect in his role in administering fine arts issues within the joint committee's jurisdiction.

The Joint Committee on Printing, created in 1846, establishes rules for congressional printing and generally oversees operations of the Government Printing Office (GPO).

In the 107th Congress, the JCP held hearings on the Administration's misguided proposal to allow executive agencies to bypass GPO and procure printing elsewhere, in violation of Federal law. Congress subsequently moved to block implementation of this proposal, and I anticipate further oversight on this subject during the current Congress.

The two joint committees do not have authority to receive or report legislation. However, both can hold hearings, issue reports and directives, and take other actions which have a substantial impact on the entities within their control, including matters relating to the expenditure of funds.

Mr. Speaker, since the three Minority members of the House Administration Committee are all new to that panel, none of us has ever served on a joint committee of Congress. I look forward to serving as ranking minority member of the Joint Committee on the Library once the joint committee has organized itself and, as expected, chooses Senator STEVENS of Alaska to once again serve as the chairman under the traditional rotation between the two chambers.

Rep. JUANITA MILLENDER-MCDONALD will also serve on the panel. As a former city councilwoman, mayor, and state assemblywoman with a professional background in education, she brings a significant breadth of experience to the committee's work. I have also served with her on the Digital Divide Caucus in the House, and look forward to working with her to support initiatives the Library of Congress has taken to make information more broadly available to the public.

On the Joint Committee on Printing, where Rep. NEY will again be chairman in the 108th Congress under the rotation, I will be joined by Rep. BOB BRADY of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, who succeeds another Member from that city serving on the panel, Rep. FATTAH.

It is fitting that we will have BOB on the JCP since he represents Philadelphia, where Benjamin Franklin established an innovative printing business at age 22, publishing newspapers, pamphlets and cartoons. BOB BRADY is a cross between Ben Franklin and Rocky Balboa.

WOMEN'S CANCER RECOVERY ACT

HON. FRANK A. LOBIONDO

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 26, 2003

Mr. LOBIONDO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on behalf of the Women's Cancer Recovery Act, a bill I introduced today with my colleague, Representative SUE MYRICK. This important piece of legislation would provide a significant measure of relief for women across our Nation who are confronted by breast cancer. We introduce this bill on behalf of women who are now fighting the battle against breast cancer, and for any friends and relatives who may have lost a loved one to this terrible disease.

According to the National Breast Cancer Foundation, this year 182,000 new breast cancer diagnoses are expected in the United States. Fortunately, with increased early detection through mammography and improved surgery options, the past two decades have seen large improvements in the treatment of breast cancer. However, although some of the trauma associated with breast cancer treatment has been reduced, in recent years there has been a sharp rise in the number of outpatient, or "drive-through," mastectomies. Of particular concern to me is that insurance plans, rather than the patient and her physician, have been determining the appropriate length of postoperative hospital stay.

Specifically, our legislation would address these concerns by requiring insurance plans that provide breast cancer medical and surgical benefits to guarantee medically appropriate and adequate inpatient care following a mastectomy, lumpectomy or lymph node dissection. This legislation will help to end the practice of "drive-through" mastectomies and will also protect doctors from any penalties or reductions in reimbursement from insurance plans when they follow their judgment on what is medically appropriate and necessary for the patient.

Most importantly, group health insurers will not be able to provide "bonuses" or any other financial incentives to a physician in order to keep in-patient stays below certain limits, or limit referrals to second opinions.